# new masses

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## The London Conference:

# CAN IT MAKE PEACE?

## by JAMES S. ALLEN

## HOLLYWOOD AFTER THE HEARINGS

### by N. A. DANIELS

## S. Finkelstein's "Art and Society" reviewed by Charles Humboldt


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# just a minute

JOHN TEMPLE GRAVES, so-called liberal Southern spokesman, is hopping mad. Not about the acquittal of the men who massacred eight Negro convicts in Georgia. Not about the conditions described in the report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights. He's burned up at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and its executive secretary, Walter White, for presenting a petition to the UN in behalf of justice for the thirteen million Negro Americans. In his Birmingham *Post* column Mr. Graves indicts Mr. White for "tattling on his country to the United Nations." It seems that this gave the Soviet delegate "cause for delight" and permitted him "to forget about conditions in his own country . . . in comparison with which our American Negro is fortune's very pet."

Something to think about there. For one thing there's the thought that we ourselves have been fortune's own pet all these years without at any time suspecting it. But we rather wonder if Mr. White's tattling was really so serious an offense. We have some doubt that the story of the Negro in America is really an atomic secret. After all there is always the possibility that some Soviet envoy might have stumbled across the truth while walking around in our Jim Crow capital or on reading a speech by John Rankin in the *Congressional Record*. There might also have been a leak in the series of articles by Ilya Ehrenburg on what he saw in Mississippi—some Russians may have seen them in *Pravda*. Then, too, we think of the hundreds and thousands of works on this confidential subject in all the libraries of the world—readily available to a host of snooping Soviet delegates.

And what about all the other tattlers before Mr. White and Dr. DuBois—Frederick Douglass, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Garrison, Phillips, Jefferson, Longfellow, Bryant, Lincoln, Thoreau, Twain? And more recently, how about the US Army and Navy which put Jim Crow into uniform and demonstrated him to the peoples of the world—and which still does?

And so our considered advice to Mr. Graves might be put into the admonition of the monkey to the buzzard in that song: *"Cool down, papa, don't you blow your top!"*

AND this reminds us of the big front-page headline we saw in last week's issue of the New York *Amsterdam News*, a Negro weekly. Now it takes quite a headline to stop us when we're hurrying home—late, as usual—and in a pouring rain at that. But this one did: "PLAN TO BAN JIM CROW IN THE NEXT WAR." Under a Washington dateline the story said, "President Truman and his entire cabinet are studying one of the most amazing confidential reports ever compiled, dealing with the status of the Negro in a new war." More was said but no more revealed.

We toyed with the idea of sending out the item to all the boys with whom we served in a Jim Crow Air Force outfit and asking for their views in an NM symposium. On second thought we dismissed the scheme for the practical reason that none of the replies, with the possible exception of one from Sgt. Charity, who was a church-goin' man, would be printable.

Anyway there's a certain morbid fascination in thinking about the men in the huddle down there in Washington—Harry, George, Jim, Bob, Lew, Clint, John, Averell and the others—and the job they're working now. An amazing, confidential plan for the "new war" that will end not only civilization and maybe mankind itself, as those scientists tell us, but will finally bring about the end of Jim Crow as well!

THE New York *Times* talked Turkey last week. A special dispatch from Istanbul revealed that "Russia seeks to weaken the Near Eastern bastion. One of her methods is to prevent the economic progress of Turkey by compelling the Turks to maintain a large military force." Could it be that it is the Reds in the State Department who are sending all those guns and munitions to Turkey to implement the nefarious Muscovite scheme? Root them out, we say.

L. L. B.


# new masses

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A Matter of Life or Death The Editors . . . . 3
Hollywood After the Hearings N. A. Daniels . . 4
The London Conference: Can It Make Peace? James S. Allen . . . . . 6
Gropper's Cartoon . . . . . 7
Loyal Miss Ferch: a short story Alan Max . . . 9
Portside Patter Bill Richards . . . . . 11
Mail Call . . . . . 12
That Chinese "Puzzle" Walter H. T. Lee . . . 13
Stendhal Takes the Stand Matthew Josephson . . 15
Book Reviews: Art and Society, by Sidney Finkelstein: Charles Humboldt; The Condemned, by Jo Pagano: Lawrence Emery; A Certain Rich Man, by Vincent Sheean: David Alman; Survey of Labor Economics, by Florence Peterson: Grace Hutchins . . 17
Films Dennis Gobbins . . . . . 21
Theater Isidor Schneider . . . . . 22
Records Sidney Finkelstein . . . . . 22



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# A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH

THESE crucial days put us in mind of Danton and his immortal cry *"De l'audace, encore de l'audace et toujours de l'audace!"* Audacity is the watchword of NEW MASSES these days, as it must shortly become that of all American democrats. At this moment, when political neanderthals prowl the land, history summons the counter-offensive. As our pages have reported, many individuals, armed with courage and social responsibility, stand fast. They call the millions to counterattack. And we of NM are prepared to bear our responsibility in driving the people's enemies back. Next week we will give you the shape of our plans. As you know, NM has never sidestepped an emergency that confronts the common man; nor shall we ever.

But at this very moment NM is confronted by the most serious crisis in its history. Not from the bluster and storm of the Un-Americans (it will never retreat before them) but from the grave threat of the creditor.

It is a matter of life or death.

NM is in its gravest danger because today, six weeks before the close of this year, we have not received the $65,000 needed to see the year through.

You recall when we began our financial drive last February we asked for $65,000. Here is the score: by means of contributions ($33,000), by means of affairs and art auctions ($12,000) we have succeeded in raising $45,000. We are $20,000 short. But by means of most drastic economies (a thirty-two-page magazine reduced to twenty-four, severe cuts in personnel, etc.) we have been able to go this far. But the magazine at this writing is at the end of its resources. The hiked costs of printing, paper, engraving have presented us with debts that can no longer be staved off. They demand that we raise $15,000 by January 15, and the most pressing of them require $10,000 by Christmas.

Or else.

We had sought to avoid bringing this question to our readers, knowing how generously they are contributing to the cause of progress in every field. We had hoped we could stave this off. But we cannot wait.

Unless NM is able to raise $10,000 within a month, and another $5,000 by January 15, a fighting voice will be stilled.

Can America afford that—can democracy foot the bill for a silenced NEW MASSES, a cost infinitely higher than the amount in cash that is required? Can we equate $15,000 with the moral, intellectual and political values NM represents? To ask that question is to answer it.

The times call for expansion, for greater effort, greater impact. We are thinking and planning along these lines. Important announcements will be made in our next issue. But our plans will not be realized unless you recognize the gravity of NM's crisis. And act upon that realization. Assuring the continued publication of the magazine must take priority over all else.

We are confident that you will not give the Un-Americans the triumph, the satisfaction of saying, "NEW MASSES is dead."

We know we will hear from you—in person, by wire, by special delivery, by airmail or return mail.

THE EDITORS.

(*See coupon on page* 12)



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# Hollywood After the Hearings

***What's happening now to the Nineteen and to the other writers, directors, actors and producers?***

**By N. A. DANIELS**

*Hollywood.*

THIS town is in such ferment as never has been seen before. Thirteen of "The Unfriendly Nineteen" returned aboard a TWA Constellation and were met at the Los Angeles airport by a delegation of 500 people, who came out despite bitter cold and a forty-mile-an-hour wind. Their enthusiasm was warmth enough for the men who had faced the Un-American Committee in Washington, and tears flowed freely all over the runways of Mines Field.

A statement was read by Ring Lardner, Jr., the gist of which communicated to the people of this city what the unfriendly witnesses felt had happened and was likely to happen in the immediate future. The writers, directors and actor who had been subpoenaed put it this way (in effect)—that they felt the Thomas gang had suffered a setback, but that a complete victory was a long way off and depended entirely on the understanding of the people who had been at home at their radios.

Amid all the rumors and counter-rumors flooding this town various things are beginning to shape up. The feeling is that the motion picture producers would *like* to fight the Thomas hatchetmen, but don't know how. The American Legion, the Hearst press, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and the hoodlum-fringe are gathering their forces for a major assault on the industry, demanding federal censorship. The producers are scared stiff. Many are in a bad situation, deep in the red (financial, not political), aware that their pictures stink on ice and that there is a growing public resentment which can only be allayed by better pictures. How to do this? Better pictures can only be made by writers who are not terrified and intimidated by the threat of censorship for political or other reasons. Better pictures can only be made by an industry that would be more free than it has ever been in the past—not strapped and bound by the running-dogs of the Thomas committee and the forces behind it. Broad public support must be mobilized — and is beginning to be mobilized—to support any fight the producers will be willing to make.

AS FOR the Nineteen themselves, innumerable requests for speakers are pouring in from community organizations and nationwide groups. Henry Wallace, now on tour (see your local paper) is known to be anxious to speak on this subject and will be flanked at many of his meetings by one or another of the Nineteen, who will speak with him. A tremendous mass meeting is scheduled for Los Angeles at Gilmore Stadium. A broad representation will be present, including labor, minority, church and scholastic speakers. Representatives of the Nineteen will fan out from this city to attend and participate in any number of gatherings, ranging from a meeting of students at the University of California in Los Angeles to the CIO convention in San Francisco late this month.

The Committee for the First Amendment seems, at this writing, to be growing closer to an understanding of the fact that while the defense of the First Amendment was their starting point, a defense of the industry and of America from a growing fascist threat will eventually find them fighting side by side with the Nineteen. This group plans some ten broadcasts in the near future, a book, and is ready to send speakers out anywhere they are asked for, to present the issues.

From Washington we get word that a group of Congressmen is planning to lead a floor fight against the citations for contempt that will be asked for by Thomas and his outfit.

The straws show that the wind is blowing in many directions at the same time. A big agent here predicts that it will be very tough for any of the

**"MY POLITICAL and social views are well known. My deep faith in the motion picture as a popular art is also well known. I don't 'sneak ideas' into pictures. I never make a contract to write a picture unless I am convinced that it serves democracy and the interests of the American people. I will never permit what I write and think to be subject to the orders of self-appointed dictators, ambitious politicians, thought-control gestapos or any other form of censorship this un-American committee may attempt to devise. My freedom to speak and write is not for sale in return for a card signed by J. Parnell Thomas saying 'OK for employment until further notice.'"—*John Howard Lawson.***
***(From the statement he was not permitted to read at the Thomas-Rankin hearings.)***



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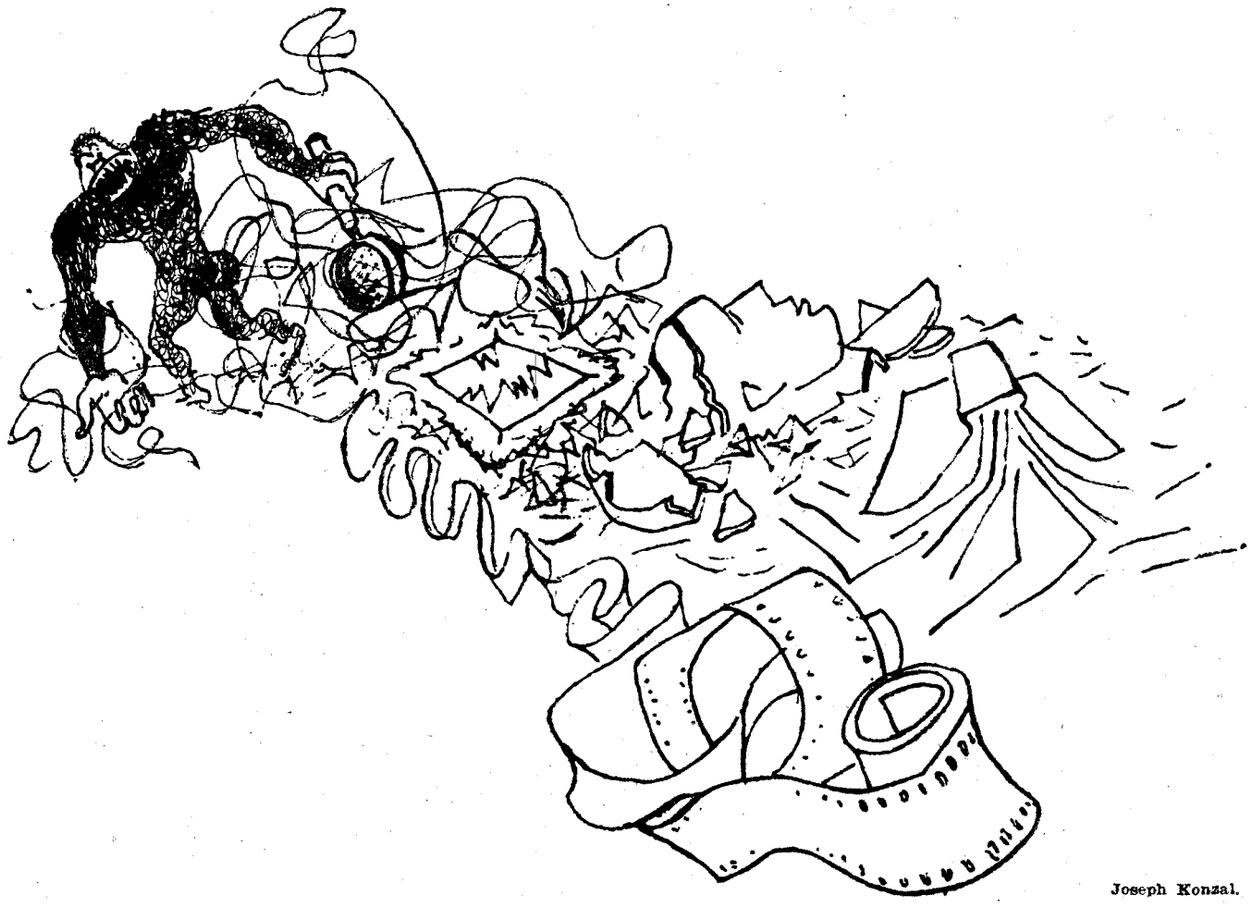

Joseph Konzal.

Nineteen ever to get work here again; a spokesman of a major studio swears on a stack of Bibles that there will not be a blacklist; another studio bigshot is known to have personally offered major financial assistance to any group fighting the Thomas committee. Confusion is many times confounded, with one section of the producers willing to sacrifice some of its best creators to appease the House Un-American Committee and another group ready to fight at the drop of a hat, if only someone will drop the hat and tuck a brick into it.

The issue, at the moment, is in doubt. For if the Legion, the Catholic hierarchy, Hearst and the lunatic fringe are successful in imposing a boycott on producers who refuse to "clean house," as Thomas has insisted, a counter-boycott might well have the effect of ruining the industry entirely. The reasons should be clear: the industry depends on box-office. There are reports that the latest Katherine Hepburn picture (*Song of Love*) has fallen off at the box-office some forty percent. Exhibitors say it is the boycott and are screaming bloody murder, pointing to thousands of inspired letters calling Hepburn a Communist. Studio spokesmen say they do not believe it is the boycott, but merely the fact that the picture is no good. No doubt there is truth on both sides, for once.

IMPORTANT point to remember and never to forget is this: the principled stand of the Nineteen is what is responsible for the support that has been gathered to this point. They will maintain that stand. Their position, too, has evolved out of a defense of the First Amendment to a defense of a major means of human communication and is still broadening into a counterattack against native fascism. They would be the first to admit that their nineteen individual jobs are the least important element in what is shaping up today.

This is a fight that has already changed the complexion of the motion picture industry and will enlist the growing awareness of millions before it is over. For, frightened or not, the industry and its employes and the people who support it are beginning to understand what is at stake here. If a single one of the Nineteen fails to get work again in Hollywood, the Thomas committee has won a major victory against America. For if a Trumbo, a Lawson, a Maltz, a Dmytryk or a Parks can be blacklisted, Katherine Hepburn goes next and she will be followed by Edward G. Robinson, Gregory Peck and any number of other artists who have at one time or another taken a position in the fight for a better America.

If the artists are silenced and broken, the industry is already in the hands of a reaction that will "clean its house" for it, dictate what can be shown on the screen and, with no opposition, will force-feed the American audience with any kind of fascist poison it has a mind to peddle.

In this way does a subpoena in the hands of a relatively unknown writer in Hollywood develop—if it is permitted to—into a death-warrant for millions of Americans now coming of age.



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## The London Conference:

# CAN IT MAKE PEACE?

***Lippmann calls for an end to the "cold war," but those in command position seem deaf***

**By JAMES S. ALLEN**

PREPARATIONS for separate peace with a West Germany are far advanced as the Four Powers meet in London. Hoover, Vandenberg and Byrnes are among the big guns of the bipartisan team who have already spoken out for a separate peace should the London Conference fail, which they intend should happen. A detailed United States proposal for the political union of the British, American and French zones of Germany is already under consideration. The separate peace plan and the Marshall Plan are but two edges of a single sword with which it is hoped to cut all remaining cords of the wartime alliance. The schedule for reviving the Ruhr as the core of the warlike bloc in the West is emerging from the Anglo-American agreement on Ruhr coal and from the Marshall Plan recommendations now before Congress, despite the many variations and conflicts within the Right in this country and because of the confusion in progressive ranks.

While the Truman Doctrine continues to flounder in Greece, the intervention of the Marshall Plan has provoked a great shift among the center and middle strata toward the Right in Britain and France. Under pressure of American reaction the French Socialists, who prided themselves on maintaining a largely mythical center position, have encouraged the Gaullist victory by joining the ranks of anti-communism. The British right-wing Laborites, who have been trying to maintain the same position, now have a serious electoral defeat to show for it. The spectre of fascism in France, the prospect of a Tory revival in Britain, and the gains of reaction in America haunt the London gathering.

Will our bipartisan policy-makers now go through with a final split at London and thus take a long step in the direction of war? They have everything ready for a break, which would formalize and also deepen the cleavage in world politics. But it is well to remember that thus far our policy-makers have stopped short before a final split in the United Nations at the General Assembly, although they have gone to great lengths to subvert the charter. They may also hesitate before assuming the responsibility for a final break at London, which would leave the stigma of warmongers indelibly upon them.

On his return from Europe Walter Lippmann has been voicing some of the considerations that must be causing hesitation within circles on the Right. I would say his worries fall roughly into two categories. He has been pointing out that a Western Europe, cut off entirely from the East and dependent upon the United States, is not economically viable. The United States has neither the means nor the will to place Western Europe upon a permanent dole. And this is fully realized in Paris and London, which count upon supplementing American aid by a rather extensive revival of commerce with Eastern Europe.

His other reservations revolve around Germany. He stands in almost vehement opposition to a separate peace with an incongruous conglomeration of West German states. He sees that the Soviet Union is the exponent of a unified Germany, while we are imposing partition. It cannot escape as sharp an observer as Lippmann that this will boomerang against the imperialist powers, for the German people will inevitably gravitate toward unification.

Accordingly, Lippmann holds that the "cold war" should be called off before it turns heavily against the United States. Will his urgent call to reach a settlement with the Soviet Union, or at least keep the door open to a settlement at London, be heeded? Does he voice more than the views of a relatively isolated group, or do his exhortations to caution and compromise mark a significant view in top policy-making circles? It is difficult to tell. Top policy-makers continue to act as if they are already deaf to reason, and as if they are embarked on the long march to the thundering line-up. If they continue on their present course the London Conference will be merely an occasion for them to engage in another grand verbal assault upon the Soviet Union, adding another chapter in the cold war.

WHICHEVER way the London Conference goes — whether it ends in final failure or reaches some partial agreements while continuing the over-all stalemate—the underlying world conflict is now sharper. The political battle is joined with a clearer definition of issues. Groupings among countries and within nations are crystallizing more rapidly, so that everyone must again take a stand.

And what is the issue? It is again between the defenders of peace and the warmongers. It is again between the defenders of democracy and imperialist reaction leading toward a fas-

### CASUALTY

**Washington—Noah Dietrich, an executive of the Hughes Tool Co., was on the stand. Questioned about the enterprising Maj. Gen. Bennett E. Meyers (ret.), the witness replied: "As a matter of fact, Senator, I don't think the man knows right from wrong. I think he is a war casualty."**

**Since the Veterans Administration does not list itching palm or calloused rump as qualifying disabilities, it is suggested that the least the War Department can do is to bestow upon the general the Order of the Golden Heart.**



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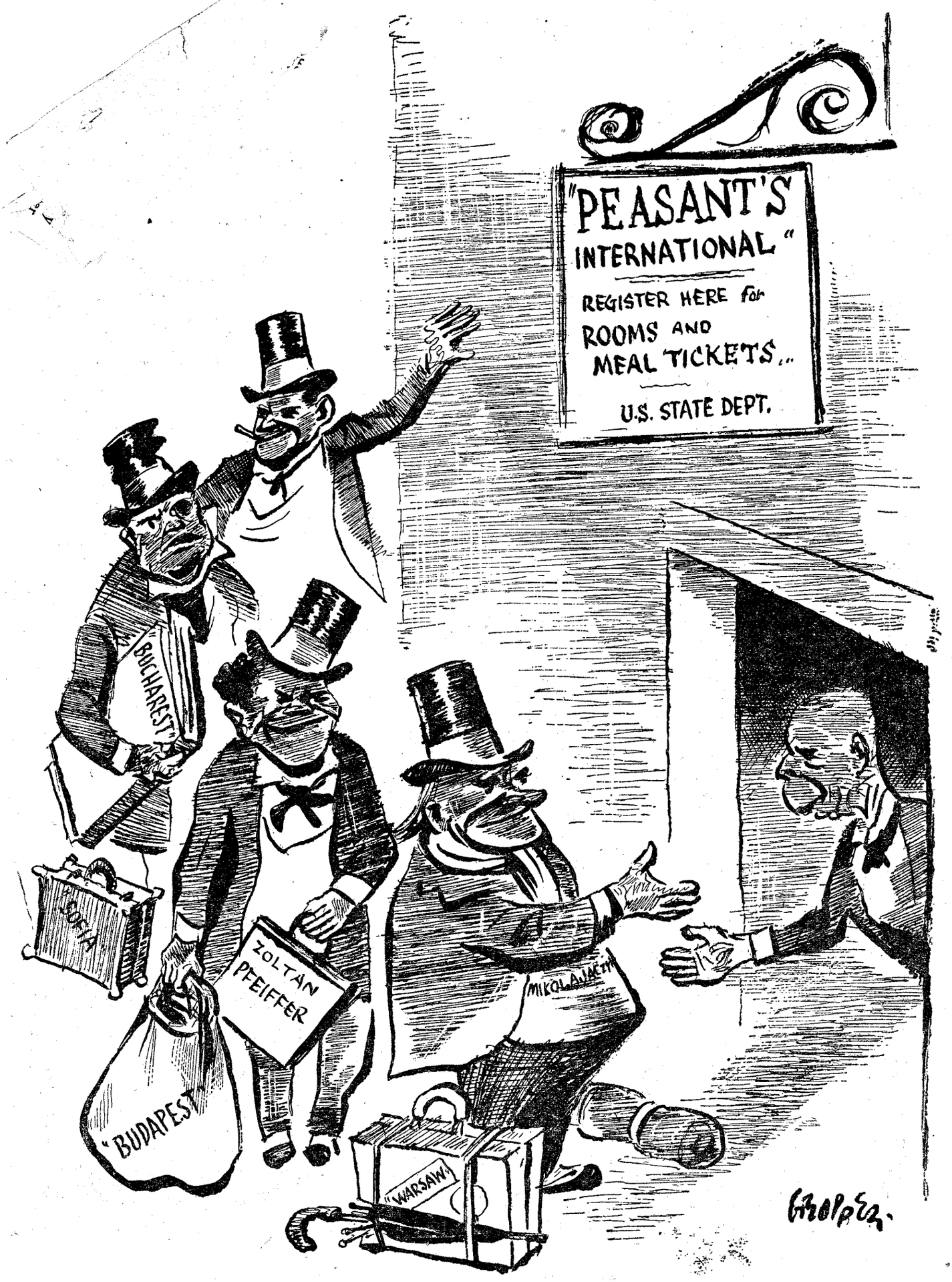


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cist revival. We see the overnight crystallization of this struggle in France. De Gaulle present shimself as another Petain; his program of the corporate state, personal dictatorship and an anti-Communist alliance is a new edition of Vichy. He has broken down the Catholic center and swept most of it for the time being into his ranks. His is the stuff of fascism and war. On the other hand, the French workers led by the Communists become the solid core of a democratic and anti-imperialist front. Again the Right Socialists, leaning towards de Gaulle as the "lesser evil," split the democratic camp, weakening the people's counterattack against the new menace.

The right-wing Social-Democrats know how to make use of the Marshall Plan as an instrument not only for partitioning Europe but also for splitting the working class. Schumacher returns to Germany after a visit in the United States and completely reverses his stand from advocating German unity to preaching German partition. James Carey, right-wing CIO stalwart, goes to Europe with the express intention of splitting the World Federation of Trade Unions on the Marshall Plan, just as the Socialists in France are attempting to divide the trade unions on the same issue.

OUR present American policy leads to two camps, and not to two blocs or two worlds. The cleavage is horizontal, not merely vertical. The capitalist world itself is cleft into two. Not only is Germany to be cut into sectional and political impossibilities, but the German workers are also divided by the Schumachers, the French workers by the Ramadiers, the French people and also the German people into fascist and democratic alignments.

Is our country exempt from this world-wide regrouping within nations? Are we outside the struggle between democracy and fascism, between freedom and imperialist reaction which is now unfolding throughout the world? Is there only one side in the United States, or do both exist in conflict?

We must agree that both are here, developing simultaneously, although reaction has gained the stronger positions and enjoys the initiative and great power, while the progressive forces remain divided and are only beginning to understand the issue and to see the imperatives. The elements of the democratic camp are here, they are in motion, there is a great stirring among them. What is needed is to establish the camp of anti-fascism, democracy and peace.

We need to understand that while reaction has made great gains since the death of Roosevelt it is not yet consolidated, it is divided within itself. It has power, but it is also finds it necessary to put on a much bigger front, to bluff and to bluster, hoping to prevent the consolidation of the democratic camp in the election year 1948 by spreading panic and fear. The reactionaries are engaged in a war of nerves, in a cold war against labor and the progressives, hoping for an inner collapse, just as they follow the same tactic against the Soviet Union, the East European democracies and the vast democratic camp within Western Europe with their constant warmongering and atomic diplomacy.

But this mixture of a real and blustering offensive by reaction also produces results not anticipated in the original plan. The forces attacked resist, consolidate their strength. Further defeats may occur, but always fresh sectors are awakened and join the struggle. The very un-Americanism of reaction rekindles the Americanism of progress. It is not all one way. Political battlelines form, perhaps vaguely at first and with hesitations, but they form.

The great imperative facing all progressives is to build the front of ogic... the Rig... forces lead... now heading the... civil liberties. There c... harm in this situation than ... dogmas, no matter how ... formed. There can be no g... danger than to encourage splintering on the Left by pursuing controversies which may have had importance two or three years ago, but which today fade into insignificance in face of the great menace. The differences between Communists and non-Communists on the Left should be aired in the light of a positive approach toward unity.

For it is from these ranks that the initiative and the organization of the counterattack on a broad front must come. It would be utterly destructive to think that the mythology of the anti-Comintern has taken such deep roots among the people, and especially within progressive circles, as to make impossible a regrouping into a democratic front, as typified earlier in the Roosevelt coalition. If we think something like this is impossible we may as well accept immediate defeat, no matter how we cover up with Leftist phrases about the future. The counterattack, the formation of the democratic camp, must be built up out of the many and diverse elements that have a place in the struggle against present reaction and the menace of fascism and war.

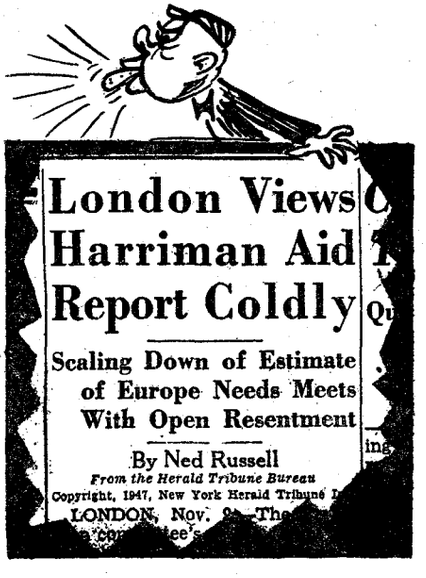
LONDON IS PLEASED BY HARRIMAN PLAN

Papers Acclaim Willingness of the Americans to Assist Europeans in Plight

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, Monday, Nov. 10— Newspaper comment on the Har... Committee's ...

Page 4, N.Y. "Times," Nov. 10.



London Views C... Harriman Aid ... Report Coldly

Scaling Down of Estimate of Europe Needs Meets With Open Resentment

By Ned Russell

From the Herald Tribune Bureau

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LONDON, Nov. ... The ...

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# Loyal Miss Ferch

## *A short story by Alan Max*

LITTLE Miss Ferch was filing letters —she had worked over the filing cabinets in this same government bureau for thirty years—when the messenger brought her the memorandum. All it said was:

"Margaret Ferch

"Filing Department

"See Mr. Riggs in Room 402 at 3 o'clock."

"Who is Mr. Riggs?" Margaret asked of tall, angular Betty Gimple who worked beside her and who was a virtual newcomer in the government, having been in the department for only thirteen years.

Betty Gimple thought for a moment as she deftly went on with her filing. "Isn't he in charge of the Loyalty Committee?" she said. "Whatever can he want?"

Little Miss Ferch replied with a shrug of her shoulders and inserted a Massachusetts division letter into the Massachusetts division folder. A summons from the Loyalty Committee might have worried some of the women in the department but not Margaret Ferch. The setting up of the Loyalty Committee system several months before had concerned Miss Ferch not at all. She had come from Idaho to work in the government as a young girl of twenty-three. She had seen administrations come and go, executive orders announced and later supplanted by new orders. Conservative or liberal administrations were all the same to Miss Ferch: they made no change in the procedure of filing letters. As for the Loyalty Order, that was all right with her—she was for loyalty, all right; it bothered her no more than an announcement of a new consul to Madagascar. When during the first weeks of the Executive Order there was a wave of dismissals of men and women who had belonged to anti-fascist organizations or made contributions to them, little Miss Ferch had taken it in her stride. After all, no one compelled anybody to work for the government and if the government said you shouldn't belong to organizations and you wanted to anyway, then you should work somewhere else where they didn't mind. It was as simple as that.

So there was no reason to give Mr. Riggs another thought until three o'clock. Meanwhile there were other things to think about: the neuritis in her leg that had plagued her for the past year and the warm sunny thought that in eleven more months she would be eligible to retire on a pension and return to Idaho and stay off her feet forever.

At exactly five minutes before three, Miss Ferch showed the memorandum to Mrs. Gearheart, her supervisor—she didn't notice the startled look on Mrs. Gearheart's plump face — and took the elevator down to the fourth floor.

At the door of room 404, Miss Ferch patted her gray hair into place and entered. She held out the memorandum to the pretty, red-cheeked secretary—she's practically a child, thought Miss Ferch—and was ushered into Mr. Riggs' office.

"SIT down, Miss Ferch," said Mr. Riggs in a thoroughly executive voice, although the eyes that peered at her through rimless glasses were more jumpy than executive.

Miss Ferch sat down and thought how very comfortable indeed it was to be sitting in the middle of the afternoon.

Mr. Riggs cleared his voice as if he were about to address a joint session of Congress. "Loyalty is a very important thing, Miss Ferch," he said.

Little Miss Ferch nodded agreement —she had never given the matter much thought before but after all loyalty was *his* work just as filing was hers.

Mr. Riggs lifted a card from his desk and looked at it. "Your own record is very good, Miss Ferch," he said. Miss Ferch nodded again.

But had she observed any hint of disloyalty among her co-workers, Mr. Riggs inquired? Any remarks indicating that someone was not a hundred percent for our government?

Miss Ferch searched her memory. It was blank.

"No," she said. "There is nothing I can remember."

"I'm sure you'll keep your eyes and ears open and let us hear if you notice anything. Thank you, Miss Ferch, that will be all." And he stared out the window at the building across the way where one Peter Gainor, head of the US Loyalty Committee of *that* bureau, was chalking up an enviable record of dismissals.

Margaret returned to the filing room and resumed her work. Betty Gimple, busy four filing cabinets away, edged over to her.

"Are you in trouble?" she asked.

Margaret giggled. "Me? Oh, dear, no." She promptly forgot all about Mr. Riggs until one afternoon two weeks later when she received another note to report to the chairman of the Loyalty Committee. With a start Margaret realized that she had kept neither eyes nor ears open since her last interview with Mr. Riggs. On the way down in the elevator she tried to recall some scrap of overheard conversation that might be of value to the Loyalty Committee. But she could recall nothing.

"Good afternoon, Miss Ferch," said Mr. Riggs. "Any news for us?"

Margaret said she was sorry but she didn't have any.

"That is too bad," said Mr. Riggs in the pained voice with which he imagined a President must reproach a special envoy returning from an unsuccessful mission to Europe.

Margaret tried to explain that she didn't know many people—she didn't get around much.

But there were twenty-five workers in her own department, Mr. Riggs reminded her, and she undoubtedly mingled with hundreds more every day in the cafeteria in the basement.

Miss Ferch felt her throat tighten —like the time Mrs. Gearheart had called her down after she had filed correspondence from Springfield, Ill., in the folder for Springfield, Mass.

"A truly loyal employe," went on



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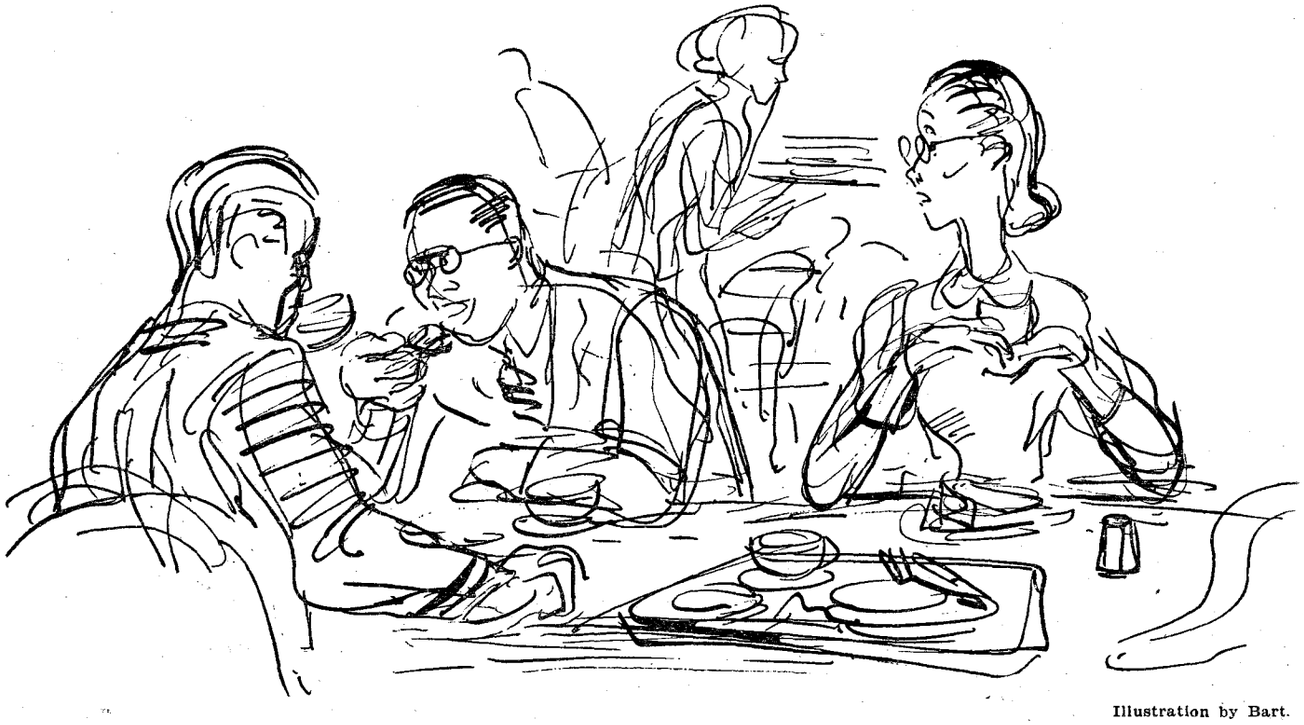

Illustration by Bart.

Mr. Riggs, tapping his desk with a pencil, "does not merely refrain from disloyal actions—he or she, as the case may be, also makes it difficult for others to be disloyal. Loyalty is not only passive—it is active as well," he continued, wondering how the phrase would sound over a national hook-up.

"I see," said Miss Ferch and she regretted inwardly that Mr. Riggs had neglected to make things clear to her at the first interview.

"On the other hand," Mr. Riggs went on, "disloyalty is not only active—it can be passive too—as when an employe, although apparently completely loyal himself or herself, as the case may be, will be tolerant of the disloyalty of others through a false sense of camaraderie." (An apt word, Mr. Riggs thought, but it would escape millions of radio listeners, especially west of the Mississippi — he would have to find a good American equivalent.)

It suddenly dawned on Miss Ferch that she was in danger—danger of being regarded as disloyal and of losing her pension. The breath seemed to leave her body.

"I trust that you will be more attentive to what goes on around you bteween now and our next interview," Mr. Riggs said.

Margaret nodded and fled upstairs to the filing room.

"Anything wrong?" Betty Gimple inquired when she noticed the drawn look on Margaret's face with its cobweb of tiny wrinkles. Miss Ferch didn't reply.

DURING the next few days she worked in an entirely new way for her. Her filing was done with only half her mind—the other half was concentrated on the doings of the other women in the office. She observed who spoke to whom and, careful not to make herself conspicuous, moved around to pick up fragments of conversation. At lunch in the cafeteria, she sat down at the most crowded table—even breaking her many years' habit of trying to avoid the company of men. She studiously neglected to buy dessert with the rest of her meal in order to have an excuse to get on line all over again and finish her lunch with a new group of employes at another table.

But the conversations were always innocent enough—although whether deliberately so or not, Miss Ferch was never sure. The topics rarely ranged beyond the latest moving picture, a sale at a department store, the oppressive Washington heat and, among the men, the pathetic showing of the Washington Senators — the baseball team, that is.

In her chintz-curtained bedroom in the brick boarding house on R Street, Miss Ferch tossed on her bed at night, examining the conversations of the day. In her mind, she went over a list of all her acquaintances to see if any of them had ever dropped a hint of a double life. In one of these sessions with herself she thought of the angular Betty Gimple and of Betty's inquiries immediately after her two meetings with Mr. Riggs. Was this simple friendliness? Was it artless curiosity? Or—Margaret stared into the darkness—was it possible that Betty Gimple had some special reason for wanting to know what happened in the office of the Loyalty Committee?

The next day Margaret managed to sit beside Betty Gimple at the cafeteria. But nothing happened. Any day now Mr. Riggs would be calling Miss Ferch in again. She could not wait for things to take their normal course, she decided. She must attempt to draw out Betty Gimple—it was like laying a trap, she admitted to herself, but if Betty was innocent no harm would be done.

At lunch the following day, Margaret suddenly said to Betty: "All you read about in the papers is Russia."

"Yes," said Betty Gimple.

Little Miss Ferch nerved herself for the decisive thrust. "I wonder if Russia is as bad as she is painted," she said.

There was a pause while Betty Gimple put a piece of bread in her mouth. Suddenly Betty pointed to a pretty woman carrying a tray.

"Isn't that a cute dress on Lottie White?" she exclaimed.

With a feeling of frustration, Margaret returned to the cream cheese and jelly sandwich.

The next afternoon it was Betty Gimple's turn to receive a memo-



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randum asking her to appear at Mr. Riggs' office.

"Sit down, Miss Gimple," said Mr. Riggs when Betty stood before him. Mr. Riggs looked at the building across the street where Pete Gainor had uncovered three disloyal workers the previous week to Mr. Riggs' one. "Loyalty is a very important thing, Miss Gimple," he went on.

"Oh, very," agreed Miss Gimple.

Mr. Riggs lifted a card from his desk and peered at it. "Your own record is very good, Miss Gimple," he continued. But had she observed any hint of disloyalty among her co-workers? Any remarks indicating that someone was not a hundred percent for our government?

"Oh, no," Betty replied. Then she suddenly thought of the remark by Miss Ferch the day before at lunch. But was that the kind of thing that Mr. Riggs was interested in? And wouldn't it be like telling tales?

"Nothing at all?" Mr. Riggs pressed her. And before she knew what she was saying, Miss Gimple asked: "If someone said she wondered if Russia was as bad as it's painted in the papers, would that . . ."

Mr. Riggs leaned toward her, his brown eyes sparkling, his right ear twitching slightly with excitement.

"Exactly, Miss Gimple, exactly," he said. "Be so good as to give me the name of the person who—"

Miss Gimple bit her lip. Tears welled in her eyes. She hadn't meant to get into anything like this.

"Come, come, Miss Gimple," Mr. Riggs went on, trying to fix his jumpy eyes on hers. "I am merely asking you for information which may be of extreme value to your government."

"It was Margaret Ferch," whispered Betty.

Mr. Riggs looked surprised. "Thank you very much, Miss Gimple," he said.

"But I'm sure she didn't mean anything by it," protested Betty.

"Thank you very much, Miss Gimple," Mr. Riggs repeated, and stood up like a President ending a press conference.

Betty Gimple felt sick and ashamed as she went upstairs in the elevator. When she reached the filing room she avoided Miss Ferch's eyes.

An hour later Mr. Riggs was saying "sit down, Miss Ferch," to a very frightened Miss Ferch. This time Mr. Riggs was not alone; he was flanked by a short, stout middle-aged man on his left and by a thin elderly woman on his right.

"We understand that you feel that our American press is not treating Russia fairly," said Mr. Riggs in an overkindly voice.

The conversation with Betty Gimple in the cafeteria flashed across Margaret's mind as her fingernails dug into the flesh of her palms. "Oh, no!" she cried. "It was Betty Gimple who told you that!"

"Names do not matter, Miss Ferch," said Mr. Riggs sweetly. "We are interested only in your views on the subject."

Miss Ferch tried to explain that she had been attempting to draw out Betty Gimple. "You asked me to find out what others were saying and thinking," she said.

"To be sure," said Mr. Riggs. "But we are also interested, naturally, in what *you* are saying and thinking." Whereupon the members of the committee questioned Miss Ferch for three-quarters of an hour.

"Thank you, Miss Ferch," Mr. Riggs said as the questioning ended. When Miss Ferch had left, the stout man said to Mr. Riggs: "Well, what do you think, Walter?"

Mr. Riggs cleared his throat. "It is hard to tell. She may really have been trying to draw out Miss Gimple as she claims. On the other hand, this may be just an alibi. It is also difficult to tell whether her nervous manner is the result of guilt or innocent fear. In fact, there is no way we can be certain."

The other members of the committee nodded.

"The question, in my opinion," went on Mr. Riggs, feeling very much like a Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court and looking out of the corner of his eye at Pete Gainor's office across the street, "is not one of guilt or innocence, but whether in these times the government can afford to have in its employ a person of questionable views. In a case of this kind, it is my opinion that the government must receive the benefit of the doubt."

The next day the people in the filing department wondered what had become of Miss Ferch.

# portside patter

**By BILL RICHARDS**

*News Item: American-born woman gives Hearst papers a vivid account of her life as a Soviet slave.*

I am a high-type American girl citizen. Twenty-three years ago at the age of two I went to Europe to study communism firsthand. During the war I was unable to return to America since I had an excellent job as a social worker at Buchenwald.

In 1945, despite my American citizenship, I was seized by a horde of Russian soldiers—all of them carrying guns. Then my ordeal began. One day, with less than three weeks' warning, a group of us were herded to a long line of freight cars and ordered aboard by an agent of the Soviet State Police disguised as a conductor.

Conditions on the train were almost beyond belief. Although I repeatedly pointed out that I was an American citizen, I was forced to accept an upper berth. We received absolutely no food or water during the entire trip. When we reached our destination an hour and a half later we were immediately subjected to the most brutal questioning which stopped only after they had forced us to tell our first and last names.

More than twenty of us were ordered to live in a single small building. There was no heat in any of the rooms and the guards refused to do anything about it just because it was mid-July. Although I emphasized the fact that I was an American citizen they gave me nothing but Russian food to eat.

For the next two weeks I was forced into a life of backbreaking slave labor, picking up heavy scraps of paper around the camp. They forced me to work, eat and sleep twenty-four hours a day. I lost more than five pounds and caught a bad cold, despite the fact that I was an American citizen.

I had many opportunities to talk to the peasants in the nearby towns and found them all vehemently opposed to Stalin. They support him merely because of a sentimental attachment to his policies at home and abroad.

Finally, the Russians put me on a boat where I managed to escape after they left. I am grateful to the Hearst newspapers for giving me $10,000 and this opportunity to tell my story to other American citizens like myself.



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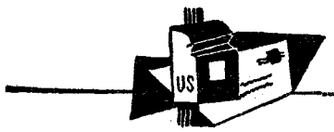
# mail call



NEW MASSES *has received a number of letters commenting on Joseph North's article, "How Would You Look under Kleig Lights?" in our October 21 issue. Mr. North's article was addressed particularly to writers, teachers, artists, scientists, musicians and other cultural workers. It criticized the silence of many of them in face of the outrages of the Un-American Activities Committee and called on them to take their stand with those now under attack. We present here three of the letters we have received. Henry Pratt Fairchild is professor emeritus of sociology at New York University; Mark Van Doren is noted as poet and critic; Jay Williams is a well-known writer of children's books.*

## Henry Pratt Fairchild:

"HOW WOULD YOU LOOK UNDER KLEIG LIGHTS?" ought to be required reading for every college and university teacher in the United States, up to the break on page 7. After that it's elective.

## Mark Van Doren:

THE simplest thing to say about the un-American Activities Committee is that it is un-American. It threatens more than a minority of the American people. It threatens more than a majority. It threatens them all. It is the one completely ignorant and arrogant activity in which I have ever seen our national government engage. The conduct of this committee—not to speak of its conception—degrades every citizen of the United States. It subverts every idea upon which the government itself has asked him to base his life. As an American I am ashamed because the committee exists, and I am more ashamed—if that is possible—of the manner in which it proceeds. It proceeds on the assumption that 140,000,000 people share its ignorance and will applaud its action. This is insulting and terrifying. The American people, like any other people, fear the dark. A lot of light is going out.

I should have preferred being asked by a paper of large circulation what I thought about all this. No such paper has asked me, so I say it here, in the interest not of a minority, not of a majority, but of us all.

## Jay Williams:

FOR a week and a half I listened to the radio broadcasts from Washington. With mounting horror and nausea I heard Mr. Stripling and Mr. Thomas employ every trick, every dirty subterfuge in an effort to frame their case. I am irresistibly impelled to think of Goering, hectoring it before his friendly jury at the Reichstag Fire trial. In the persons of some of the witnesses, I am forced to recall the half-witted, ataxic van der Lubbe. The evidence of frame-up and bias is as clear as though it were cut after the same pattern. If ever this country faced a moment of national outrage, this is that moment.

At one point in the testimony, when Mr. Stripling (I believe it was) was endeavoring to hammer Alvah Bessie into submission, he said, in effect, "You need have no hesitation about our right to attack Communists; this committee has officially decided that the Communist Party is the agent of a foreign power." And at another point, when Dalton Trumbo had been excused, the committee read a long list of alleged proofs of Mr. Trumbo's Communist affiliations; among them was the fact that he had contributed to NEW MASSES and *Mainstream*.

Now here, precisely, is the argument which should startle awake every creative artist. By its own account, this committee is empowered to decide officially that a legal political party is really a nest of spies. If the committee has this power, who can say what political or religious affiliation will be settled on next as subversive or traitorous? By its own account, this committee may arbitrarily decide that any publication is, by inference, traitorous, since it may contain a Communist on its editorial board, or it may print an article implying that Russia is not an Oriental despotism. Heaven shield the New York *Times*, then, for having printed Herbert Matthews' articles on the Spanish Civil War! And, since the pariah's shadow befouls the whole, how guilty is the contributor of bucolic poetry to this venomous organ!

I agree with Joseph North. Those writers who hide themselves today for fear of their jobs will not be able to hide from an American version of the Storm Troops. Writers who excuse themselves because they differ with Howard Fast, or with NEW MASSES, or with Mr. North, or with the man in the moon, will not be excused by their own audiences whom they have betrayed. They misread America. It is *because* they differ that they must unite in defending those now under attack by the Un-American Committee. This difference of opinion is the most precious thing we have. As intellectuals, out of such differences we strike the sparks for intellection. The purpose of the committee is to subdue all such differences; to cast us all into the same mold—the mold of the subservient sneak, the frightened toady, the intimidated lackey.

## NM Anthology

TO NEW MASSES: Despite its flaws, NM has had a publishing history rich in scorn for the diabetic sweetness of the big magazines. You have run a considerable bulk of fine short stories, poetry, art and literary criticism, and I keep wondering why NM doesn't peacock about that fact, in book form. I submit that if you put out an NM anthology, with cartoons, supplemented by a running commentary of the magazine, its problems, personalities, renegades, you would easily get 10,000 buyers, and that would cover the nut. How much good it will do? Plenty.

H. D. (a prospective buyer).
Brooklyn.

(See Page Three)

To NEW MASSES
104 East 9th Street
New York 3, N. Y.

Enclosed please find $..... as my contribution to your drive for $15,000 by January 15. In addition I pledge to donate $..... by ..... (date)

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... Zone ..... State .....



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# THAT CHINESE "PUZZLE"

***Neither Washington's MAGIC nor Kuomintang fireworks can dispel the reality rooted in the land.***

**By WALTER H. T. LEE**

*Nanking.*

IMPORTANT statements have appeared about China, including the recent ones by Marshall, Wedemeyer and Bullitt. No doubt there will be others. But it strikes us here that the magic is not in the word but in the deed; or rather the deed as performed by MAGIC, as the US Military Advisory Group in China is called. Although unauthorized by Congress, this group has been operating in Nanking since V-J Day with at least 750 officers and men. It initiated and carried through the reorganization of Chiang Kai-shek's Ministry of Defense. It has taught his officers staff procedure. It has helped them establish military training depots in Mukden, Peiping, Sian and Chengtu. Assisted by the personnel of the US Seventh Fleet, it is directing naval training for Chiang at Shanghai and Tsingtao. Furthermore, its advisers are attached to eleven training schools.

One can hardly overlook the fact that Chiang's Ministry of Defense has an administrative structure parallel to MAGIC, with each American section head having a Chinese counterpart. More military training depots are to be opened in Sinkiang and Formosa. Ten of MAGIC's staff members, headed by the American cavalry officer Col. Holmes G. Paullin, have just gone to Formosa for combat training. Under a rotation system each infantry division is to receive three months' basic training, American style. The first reequipped and retrained divisions will be sent to Manchuria and North China to continue the civil war.

We have not forgotten Washington's pledge in December, 1945, to withdraw US forces from China. In fact about a year ago the State Department announced the "completion" of this withdrawal. But the American military and naval missions remained, and new interventionist steps were prepared. The State Department could not help but feel uneasy when on Dec. 14, 1946, the UN Assembly passed a resolution which in part recommended that member states withdraw their troops from other member states unless a published treaty authorized their stay. Only recently Chiang's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that American troops and Marines were on Chinese soil "with the consent of the Chinese government." But as the New York *Times* correspondent here reported on October 17, this statement had been requested by the US Embassy.

**The Kuomintang to the Chinese people: "You want this apple?" (Apple is labelled "democracy"; the red hat "communism.") Cartoon by Ting Tsung.**

In the minds of American policy-makers Chinese Communists are supported by the Soviet Union, and since the United States opposes the Soviet Union it should also help to fight the Chinese Communists and support their enemy—Chiang Kai-shek and his associates. Admiral Thomas C. Hart, retired, recently declared that a Sovietized Eastern Asia was fully as menacing to America as would be a Sovietized Western Europe, but that the advance of communism in China could be stopped at much less effort and cost than contemplated for Europe by the Marshall Plan. Col. Melvin J. Mass, national president of the US Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association, spoke even more dogmatically. According to him the world was choosing sides for a war between the United States and the Soviet Union. He predicted that as Britain would try vainly to remain neutral, Germany and Japan would be America's principal allies.

Both Marshall and Wedemeyer have been annoyed by the lethargy, defeatism, incompetence and corruption of Chiang Kai-shek's regime. While Marshall has always wanted to save the face of this Asiatic Franco, Wedemeyer criticized him almost without reserve. Apparently Washington, cocking one eye toward public opinion and the other toward future markets and resources in China and the "Soviet threat" in Asia, sees somewhat better with the second eye. To get tough with the Soviets, therefore, means to get soft with Chinese reactionaries under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek.

The Asiatic Franco fully appreciates this. His recent order for total mobilization has drawn a very shrewd remark from the London *Economist* (July 12): "To qualify for American aid the civil war must be lifted from the level of an internal fight and put on the international plane. Nanking has therefore been making the most of alleged Russian aid to the Communists and of incidents such as the recent clash on the Sinkiang-Mongolian border to show itself in line with Greece and Turkey as a country within the scope of the Truman Doctrine."

THIS approaches a sort of tragi-comedy. It is sad because present American policy toward China is based on false premises. The propagandists of Sino-American reaction—like Hollington Tong, Lin Yu-tang, Henry Luce and Freda Utley—would like to have the public believe that the present civil war is a fight between communism and democracy, whereas in reality the actual issues in China are between democracy and feudalism.

That the Chinese Communists are



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not out to direct a socialist revolution in China is concretely proved by their agrarian or land policy. As is now known to many people both in China and abroad, the approximately ten percent of China's rural population which comprises landlords and rich peasants possess seventy to eighty percent of the cultivated land. On the basis of this concentrated land ownership they exploit their tenants and hired laborers far more cruelly than did the aristocrats in France before the French Revolution. The ninety percent of China's rural population that comprises hired farmhands, poor peasants, middle peasants and others possess only twenty to thirty percent of the cultivated land. They labor the year round and cannot even feed and clothe themselves: they are on the border of starvation.

To change this miserable situation it is necessary to overthrow the feudalistic land system and put agriculture on a democratic footing. Chinese Communists understand this progression of history and would not establish socialism until long after the new democracy becomes a fact.

READ what one of China's anti-Communist scholars has to say on this subject: Professor Wan Kuoting of the University of Nanking, an American missionary institution, published an article in *Ta Kung Pao*, a semi-government daily in Shanghai (March 17) entitled "Land Reform as Conducted by Kuomintang and Communists." "From the theoretical standpoint," said Prof. Wan, "the land policies of the Communists and the Kuomintang have a great deal in common. Both are based on Sun Yat-sen's idea of the equalization of land ownership, and the land-to-the-tiller principle." As a general comment he stated that the "concessions now made by the Kuomintang may not be far-reaching enough," and concluded that the Kuomintang "has not made real use of the land reform as a means of gaining the confidence of the people. . . . The Communists, on the other hand, have translated their paper program into immediate action."

Prof. Wan's observation was borne out by the Basic Land Law promulgated by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on October 10. This law is based on the resolution adopted on September 13 by a national agrarian conference, convened by the Communist Party and attended by delegates from all over China. When the New York *Times* correspondent reported this reform program from Nanking on October 18 he misunderstood it as a departure from Sun Yat-sen's principles. His editor in New York went further, giving it this headline: "China Reds to End Land Ownership." The contents of the report, of course, reveal that the very opposite is true.

The Basic Land Law simply establishes guides for redistribution of land on the basis of equality. New land deeds are given by the local government, and land so held is recognized as the individual property of each person. The present landlords are given land in the new distribution on an equal basis with the peasants. Kuomintang members are given land on the same basis as other people. Even the families of traitors and civil war criminals, if themselves untainted, are given land also an an equal basis. Land belonging to commercial and industrial concerns is not only untouched in the redistribution but even protected from encroachment. Large forests, hydraulic engineering works, mines, large pastures, waste lands and lakes are administered by the government. Thus state lands coexist with private lands. And in places where the land has already been equally distributed before the promulgation of this law, and provided that the peasants do not demand it, the land is not to be redistributed.

**"Roadblock." A comment on the reception of a people's delegation which went to Nanking for the ending of the civil war. They were met by secret police, by whom they were beaten and [illegible]. By Chu Wu Shih.**

IT IS clear that what the Chinese Communists desire to exterminate is not private land property but a feudalistic land system. What they are actually carrying out as a reform program is a land-to-the-tiller system and not communism. Not only are they not introducing communism but they are attempting to increase private personal land property. In the distant future, of course, they hope to realize socialism and eventually communism. But for the present generation at least they do not only desire the preservation of private property but even go further and want to develop it. Their object is to liberate the productive forces and foster the free independent management of this private land. Their object is to increase agricultural productivity and rural production so that modern industrialization in China can become a real possibility.

Pseudo-experts on the Far East in America and Europe would like to compare the present China with that of the second half of the nineteenth century when the Tai Ping Rebellion and other peasant revolts threatened but did not end Manchu dynastic rule. They seem to think that the old China, and with it Chiang Kai-shek, can still be saved. What they have not fully appreciated is the fact that whereas then it was a peasant movement without correct leadership, now the national democratic upsurge encompasses China's elite and all classes.

Secretary George C. Marshall in his speech at Lafayette College on October 18 urged greater emphasis on history by the American education system. In China we offer similar advice to the American policy-makers, so that hundreds of millions in China and America should not suffer from their lack of an understanding of history. There is no dilemma if history is well understood. There is no "Chinese Puzzle" as the New York *Herald Tribune* (October 18) calls it. There is no puzzle in China.



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# Stendhal Takes the Stand

***Across the gulf of a century the words and deeds of the great French novelist thunder a message to men of our age.***

## By MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

*The following article was one of the papers read at the literature panel of the recent Conference on Cultural Freedom and Civil Liberties called by the Progressive Citizens of America in New York.*

I WOULD like to take as my subject a few ideas about the relationship of the writer to his environment, ideas that arose from some study I made of the great French novelist Henri Beyle, nowadays known by his pseudonym "Stendhal." Stendhal died as an obscure man-of-letters and diplomat about a century ago, but his forgotten books were revived only at the end of the last century, and it was not long after that that he came to be accepted throughout the world as one of the most original and philosophical of all the novelists. Reading him now one feels that he is modern, he is remarkably timely; his books speak to us prophetically about problems that concern us most today. His contemporary appeal, his timeliness, is in great measure traced to the fact that throughout his life and in nearly all his writings he was profoundly interested in politics. In fact his books taken together form a reservoir of very fresh and provocative ideas on, for instance, the study, care and treatment of dictators; or on how to live by your wits in an age of intolerance and tyranny.

I am reminded of one episode in Stendhal's novel *The Red and the Black*, published in 1830, the point of which is apt on the present occasion. The hero of the book, you may remember, serves for a time as secretary to a minister of Louis XVIII and is present at an evening party attended by great notables. One by one the guests are announced and each, as was the custom in those ultra-conservative times, wears one or more ribbons, crosses, medals or other decorations. Indeed, they were so common that many believed their owners obtained them quite cheaply, or with little exertion. Then a man enters who is of most distinguished appearance but wears no decoration whatsoever. He is an Italian who once took part in an uprising against the tyrannical king of Sicily, was caught and sentenced to the gallows, but escaped to live in exile in France. And Stendhal's hero exclaims: "There goes a man who wears the only kind of decoration that is not bought and sold nowadays: a sentence of death!"

Now here today, though I see some quite distinguished persons present, none of them wear any medals or grand crosses or ribbons. But there are some among us who have the honor of being singled out for prosecution by the Un-American Committee of Congress; and this, I say, is a decoration that lends them the greatest distinction, such as only a few would care to win; and we should pay them our sincere homage. I believe that is the sense of this gathering.

I remember when it used to be fashionable, a good many years ago, for writers to say: "I for my part take no interest in politics." Perhaps that was possible in a relatively peaceful era. But if you lived through years like 1789 and 1793 and 1815, as did Stendhal, if you witnessed the overthrow of five regimes in fifty years, numerous revolutions and Continental wars spreading from the Atlantic to the Russian steppes, then you could scarcely be a non-political fellow. Or, to draw a parallel, if you lived in the twentieth, the most murderous of centuries, and saw two world wars, great industrial depressions and many insurrections, you would also wonder how anyone could be indifferent to politics. For today there are no peaceful retreats, no monastic refuges. You may wish to withdraw from the world and, in the old phrase, "cultivate your garden." But where are there garden walls high enough to afford immunity from the atom bomb?

IN THE storm-ridden time of Stendhal—embracing the French Revolution, Napoleon's Empire and the Royalist Restoration—we find some very significant parallels with our own age. Significant not because we see history repeating itself in the same way but because certain aspects of human nature do not change very easily, and men are often led to play the same tricks or fall into the same blunders. The politics of power do not differ essentially when carried on by an aristocracy of money instead of a landed nobility.

The French Revolution had ended by taking up with a big military leader, Napoleon, who defended it against the feudal monarchs of Europe as well as the British. Rightly or wrongly the French, under Napoleon, felt that their armies were overthrowing older tyrannies founded upon superstition, privilege and serfdom, and that they were spreading throughout Europe their doctrines of equality. But after Waterloo, in 1815, that was all over. The kings and queens, the aristocrats of the land came creeping back. Under the guidance of Prince Metternich they formed the Holy Alliance and imposed a peace that was intended to preserve Europe for an indefinite period of time from horrors like the French Republic and its liberal ideas. Their slogan, under Metternich, was: "It shall not happen again." Police spies and informers now moved everywhere to guard against the unrest of the lower orders or the agitation of liberals; censors were posted not only over the press but even in the classrooms of universities to control the lectures of professors and the thought of students. This was the police state in the time of Metternich, widely imitated all over Europe, an age of black reaction—after the eighteenth century's promise of enlightenment—a new age of darkness.

Now Stendhal, who had finally gained time to write books, in the peace and leisure that came after 1815, discovered that his heart and mind belonged to the cause of the democrats who had fought for the French Revolution, but that his beliefs were not only out of fashion and out of favor, but were now regarded as so many dangerous thoughts. In the postwar decades the restored Bourbons desired that writers should conform to the reestablished principles of the divine right of kings, the authority of the Catholic Church, the privileges of the nobility and the



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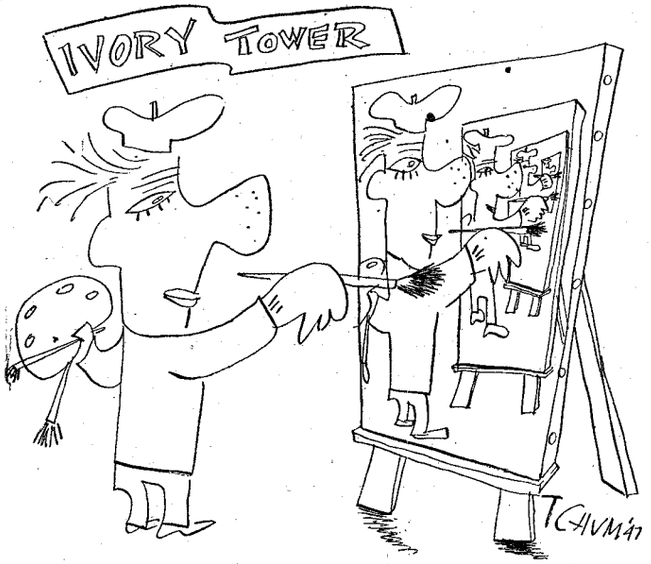
subjection of the lower classes who, incidentally, had no right to vote or speak in their own interests.

These was great pressure, then, on writers to fall in line. It was fashionable, after the war, to ridicule ideas of progress and social justice, to be resigned to long-existing evils or inequalities, and even—this is a wonderful parallel too—to write historical romances, "escape" novels, in the manner of Sir Walter Scott. Should Stendahl conform? But he was convinced that the reactionary ideas then in vogue were so much rubbish. To put it simply, he wanted to write like a realist and not like a mystical romanticist, and about the world of today, not the Gothic ages. He believed in progress; he was a fervent liberal and believed in the enjoyment of liberty. The tides of history never move in only one direction, he was convinced; this recurrence of political absolutism or reaction would be limited in time, checked by new, impending social upheavals. In the long run the future would be shaped by the drives of masses of common men toward self-improvement, by renewed faith in reason, and not by the dogmas of authoritarians and obscurantists.

No, Stendahl could not be a conformist, he could not be what was then called "right-thinking." The books of those who were that, who tried to appease the censors or gain the favor of the king's ministers, were all so much cant. Later generations of men would despise them, and they would be cast into the rubbish heaps of history.

"I write what I *myself* think and not what *is thought* [by others]," he said. Jealous of his independence, of his originality, of his difference, he determined that he would write for the minority who secretly cherished freedom; or, failing to reach them, for future generations of free men, liberated by new revolutions whose coming he accurately predicted. Stendhal wrote under various pseudonyms, chiefly the one by which he is known today; his books boldly probed the great social questions of his time but were masked by his devices of irony and satire. At times he was forced to drop out of sight, by going into exile. But at any rate he was happier thus, being himself, expressing himself, instead of imitating others; and in the end he gained the numberless readers of future times, a unique immortality.

TODAY our postwar political climate is much like that of the time of Metternich, the determined statesman of reaction. Reaction now is directed not by kings and landed nobles but by economic royalists, as we call them. The slogan is the same: "It shall not happen again." What shall not happen again? Well, in our own country, what went on under the New Deal, that died with Roosevelt. Labor tasted too much freedom; we must curb labor unions. And abroad, what happened in Russia and is spreading in Eastern Europe, or parts of China or elsewhere—the redistribution of land and wealth—all that must be stopped. Or at least "contained." We are told that we must all join in a great conflict of ideologies, the underlying assumption of our own ideology being that there is something divine in our system of free private enterprise while those who are opposed to it are all the children of the Devil. We are told this a hundred times a day over the radio and through the newspapers; and as writers we are urged and prodded to conform to this view of the world or pay the penalty. If we do not conform we are liable to be—well—investigated by the grand inquisitors of a committee of Congress that now sits permanently in judgment of what thoughts are patriotic and what are disloyal, what is American and what is un-American.




On the whole, conditions are not yet as bad as they were in the time of Metternich's police states, though the same mean and stupid forms of persecution are showing themselves. The voices of certain men who were tolerably independent are fading off the radio. Everybody is beginning to sound alike; many liberals are silent, or unwilling to stick their necks out. I am not so much frightened by what is going on as I am filled with a sense of shame.

But meanwhile, what lessons can we draw from the example of earlier writers who lived under regimes that coerced or regimented public opinion? First of all we must, like them, have the courage to hang on to our power of reasoning when others around us are confused or emotionally stampeded by propaganda. This was the method of Voltaire when he protested publicly that it wasn't civilized to have a man drawn-and-quartered, as was the innocent Jean Calas, mainly because he was a Protestant. It was the method of Zola, who refused to be swept off his feet by the popular hysteria over the alleged treason of Dreyfus.

In the second place, men like Swift, Voltaire and Stendhal have shown us that humor, satire, the weapons of ridicule may become most powerful arms. I can imagine how fruitfully Voltaire, were he alive, might work on the theme of a great nation busily teaching other nations to love freedom and free enterprise by alternately denying them food or menacing them with the atom bomb. It seems to me that a movement of liberal or progressive opposition should remember the example of the great pamphleteers and avoid being gloomy or self-righteous, thus showing—in the face of adversity—that it enjoys the battle being waged.

Finally we must nowadays take note of the brutalizing effect of years of horrible warfare, which have made many people amazingly callous. To counteract such effects, we must exert more effort to reinforce, to reassert our feeling of humanity and our capacity for indignation. Zola, in his recollections, tells us that as the Dreyfus case developed and he learned some of the truth of the affair, he found himself unable to eat his morning meals because the newspapers arriving then caused him to choke with rage. He lived, he said, "in a state of perpetual indignation." During these dark years, then, we must cling to our reason, keep our wits about us and our humor, and also our sense of oneness with all of common humanity, everywhere.



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# review and comment

## THE BEST KIND OF CRITIC

***Sidney Finkelstein's book is a fresh and exciting search for the human content in art.***

**By CHARLES HUMBOLDT**

THROUGHOUT history there have been thousands of bad critics, some few hundred good and a few great ones; the creative critic is rare as a grain of radium. He alone passes beyond acute perception and mature judgment to regard the work of art as the artist observes the world: not just in its finished form, but in conception and change. Now this way of looking at things is both most natural and most difficult. That is why when the creative critic says something it seems so ordinary that one wonders why nobody else said it before. Or if someone did say it, why no one else remembered it.

It may be unimportant to decide whether or not Sidney Finkelstein is a creative critic, or to what degree he owes his insights to Marx and Engels; the reader of his book* and of his work in NEW MASSES and *Mainstream* can judge for himself. But it can be said that his attitude toward art makes sense in a way that few writers about it do; that he converts many of its closed secrets into open ones; and that he shares with the masters of dialectics the conviction that art is an act of communication between human beings, rather than a complicated treaty over which creator and audience confront one another warily. Even more, he realizes that it is not enough to share that conviction; one has to break down the barriers to understanding between the artist and the people whom he must reach to live. His devotion to that task earns him the love of both.

*Art and Society* is one stage of a long trip, neither end nor starting point. But the essential of all journeys is there; the direction, the knowledge that beneath the tangle of media, idea and form, one will ultimately find the tracks of human experience. Is this a platitude? If so, it is one which has never been accepted by the mass of critics. Otherwise the latter would long ago have solved the problem of continuity amid divergence in the history of the arts, or been able to explain what they meant by esthetic emotion. Finkelstein's handling of this question is basic to his entire method:

"The languages of communication which are so integral a factor of art did not arise for the purpose of providing material for artists. They arose out of the need of men to live together and expand their relationships. They developed as the changing and growing organization of mankind that we call society provided new material for them and made new demands upon them. Just as society became an organization involving man's emotional relationships, in which his physical needs were clothed, so these languages of communication took on a content of emotional and human relationships. . . .

"It is this presence of emotion within language, essentially due to the fact that language is saturated with human relationships and human perceptions of nature, that rouses the esthetic emotion so beloved by philosophers of art. The special excitement or feeling of beauty in a work of art is due to the fact that art is not an emotion of the artist, or a collection of materials that exists outside him, but a combination of both. There is an intense pleasure in finding the mark and character of a human being in what is apparently abstract sound or dead matter; the pleasure of all social communication given concentration by the craft of the artist, who is a master of communication."

The idea of the continuity of active social experience—that is, of contact with material reality—and art is fundamental. It is the key to a comprehension of changes in form and style, the relation of the popular arts to the work of the masters, romanticism and classicism, even to an understanding of abstraction in art. It determines the demands which the reader or spectator must make upon himself when he studies a work of art, and it also fixes the responsibility of the artist to make common ground with his audience. In Finkelstein's case, it is the source of innumerable insights into the history, the movements and specific works of literature, painting and music.

I MAY have given the impression that *Art and Society* is a forbidding technical work on esthetics. Quite the contrary. Finkelstein has avoided the vice of so much left-wing criticism: imposing theoretical formulations devoid of the flesh of example. If there is anything this book conveys, it is warmth, a full-blooded love of *this* or *that* poem, landscape or opera. It is utterly devoid of the carping which critics with bees in their bonnets inflict upon any mere scribbler or dauber who doesn't fit into their scheme of what "pure art" or "art for the people" should be. The fanatic for Stravinsky may be disappointed: he will find no sneers at Verdi. The enemy of abstraction will get no comfort: there is no beating over the head of Picasso or Mondrian. There is, instead, a patient and yet eager search and uncovering of the human aims of each artist which enter into the formal elements of his work, into its structure, style and texture. And there is a deep respect for any work, simple or complex, which serves to widen the horizon of man's perception and knowledge of his world. As one reads one realizes that the snob and the philistine are really two heads on the same coin. Both are convinced that the artist and the people are separated by a wall of incomprehension; only the snob blames the people, and the philistine the artist, for having built it. Finkelstein believes we can deprive both these professionals of their livelihood by removing the wall.

A book of this type deserves much more than one or two reviews in our press. I can do little more here than suggest its scope and the variety of its coverage, which embraces such diverse

*ART AND SOCIETY, *by Sidney Finkelstein. International.* $2.75.



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subjects as the three languages of Shakespeare and Mozart; the folk origins of the musical forms of the seventeenth and eighteenth century; the function of the clown in Shakespeare, the "disappearance of the wall" in the frescoes of Gozzoli, Ghirlandaio and Filliplno Lippi; the distinction between national and nationalistic art; the possibilities for a native American opera; the relation of the struggle for great art to the struggle for a society in which there is no exploitation of man by man. What is hard to convey is the suggestive quality of both the theoretical discussions and the analyses of individual works, the way in which a judgment, no matter how well documented, never closes the question. There seems always an invitation to the reader to come along, to see whether he cannot make some discoveries himself or even find something to dispute about. This is teaching of the highest order. There is a similar unacademic freshness in Finkelstein's cutting to the core of certain questions which have been strangled by classifications and categories. For example, the true nature of realism has been persistently obscured by efforts to identify it with naturalism, genre art or simple copy work on the one hand, and pure form on the other. According to some theories, opera (an art "structure" in Finkelstein's terminology) cannot possibly be realistic; in others, anything that is even reminiscent of natural appearance is positively unreal. Recognizing complacency in the first position and posturing in the second, Finkelstein states quite simply, "If the test of realism in the structure of art is its function, the test of realism in art is its human content. This test must be applied as severely to a language that reproduces natural appearances as to one that seems to depart from them." Again he has correctly posed an irritating, long-standing problem by referring it to the objective realities of the material world and of human relations, and he has implied that its continuous solution is the common responsibility of the artist and the people, both transformers of reality.

This is Finkelstein's first book and it would be fatuous to demand no errors in it. I think he would have done better to use fewer instances to illustrate any given point. In some cases the designations are incorrect, as the defining of Chagall as an abstractionist; at other times the assertions are so fragmentary and abrupt as to be useless to the reader, *e.g.*, the description of *Paradise Lost* as "the story of Genesis, and its relation to the struggle of Puritan against Royalist." The discussion of the national problem in the arts would have been strengthened by an examination of the interaction of class relations and struggles upon national movements, aims and ideologies. (I imagine there will be some theoretical stirrings on this question.) One or two of the final chapters seemed to me rather hurriedly organized, with

otherwise excellent studies in awkward places, such as the passages on Cezanne in the chapter on the national question, or the fine appreciation of James Joyce in the chapter on classicism and abstraction. Let's make no more of these points than they deserve.

It is a splendid thing to have this book appear today. It emphasizes not only the intellectual vitality of the Marxist tradition but also the power of individual Marxists to mature in the face of the most distracting pressures. It can help immeasurably to advance our thinking on cultural matters, restoring unused eyes and ears to active life, scouring our rusty values, and showing that our complacent platitudes on art mean something other or much more than we thought they did.

## Violent Circus

THE CONDEMNED, *by Jo Pagano. Prentice-Hall.* $2.75.

RATHER ambitiously setting out to examine "the why and wherefore of man's inhumanity," this story of a kidnapping, a murder and a lynching in a mythical California town is more like a lesson in Sociology I than the "terrific novel of violence" it is called on the book-jacket.

In a prologue and an epilogue, and in extended digressions throughout the story itself, the author hammers at his question—Why? "Crime," he asserts, "is not the exclusive property of any particular region, people, or class of people: its manifestations are as universal as they are multiple."

In the particular crime he investigates—two men kidnap the son of the town's richest man and murder him in a shockingly brutal manner—the motive is money. Yet the author insists repeatedly that "all men do not kill for money; all men, needing money, do not kill." What, besides the need for money, made these two kill? Of one of them, the actual murderer, the author says "there is no doubt that he was insane: the autopsy revealed a tumor pressing against his brain." He was also a violent anti-Semite ("Let me tell you something, brother, Hitler had the right idea") and the victim was a Jew.

The murderer's accomplice occupies most of the author's attention. He is frail, fearful, semi-literate and neurotic from anxiety over his wife's illness and a lifetime of poverty.

Two of the three leaders of the mob which lynches the killers were as mentally ill as their victims; the third found his greatest joy in describing the suffering his asthma caused him. The effect of their crime on each of them was remarkable: Jonathan Holmes, feed-and-seed-store owner, was the possessor of a particularly revolting sexual aberration. After the lynching he never had a recurrence of it. Mike Riordan, the asthmatic bartender, went back to work "looking much younger, and complaining not so much of his asthma as formerly." Robert Lawson, insurance salesman and an incurable dipsomaniac, sobered up, joined Alcoholics Anonymous, and developed "high hopes of a reconciliation with his wife."

The whole affair had a remarkable effect upon another person in the town, Gil Stanton, gifted journalist and popular columnist. There were some who held that his blazingly angry reports of the murder helped create a lynch atmosphere in the town. After he met the murderer's accomplice and learned how weak and backward he was, he developed a conscience. "We throw



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a poor bastard like that loose on the world, then when he can't make the grade we kick his teeth in." And from that he developed a sense of social responsibility: "We make the world we live in, and we're responsible for whatever happens in it." After the lynching he threw up his job, abandoned a promising novel, moved to Philadelphia and became a social welfare worker.

The author constantly interrupts his story for extended discussions of his own, "like the leader of a chorus commenting in wonder and in awe on the action," as the book-jacket describes it. In the present work the device is a particularly irritating and distracting one, with the author's comments on the chummy level: "But—again—enough of these melancholy reflections; let us continue with the enveloping horror of our tale, unwelcome though the task may be. . . ."

But for all his side excursions, the author himself never achieves a direct answer to his query, Why? The nearest he approaches it is in the words of one of his characters: "Society has failed man, and failing man, has taken resort to violence." And that is pretty vague. The word "society" is a cloak which hides the specific forces operating within it. It becomes impossible to fix responsibility for any action, good or bad. This accounts for a kind of pseudo-naivete in Mr. Pagano's book, a pretense of being incapable of evaluating either his characters or what they do. Everything is just a spectacle, a circus at which the author goggles like an overgrown child, unable to make up his mind whether the animals are more or less important than the acrobats.

LAWRENCE EMERY.

## Through the Needle's Eye

A CERTAIN RICH MAN, *by Vincent Sheean. Random House.* $3.

THE wealthy hero of Mr. Sheean's new novel is described by a friend as a modern Haroun al-Raschid. Landon Roebuck is stimulated by his war experiences and his friendship with Martha Winstead, a young social worker, to investigate the sources of his wealth. When he discovers that a good portion of it derives from substandard Harlem dwellings, he decides to build a housing project for the Negro people. His family, the press, business colleagues, managers and friends fall upon him for this "revolutionary" scheme and dub him "the eccentric millionaire." The press and a real-estate group frame a Negro minister


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whom Roebuck has placed on the board of the new venture. Despite such pressure, Roebuck goes on with his project.

In the course of the story, Mr. Sheean reveals considerable insight into the minds of the wealthy, revealing their callousness and brutality in defense of their economic interests. But his understanding of other segments and forces in society and of people's movements is much less penetrating. He is perceptive enough to realize that Roebuck's plan is something less than a panacea for the world's ills, that it is at best the individual gesture of one man rich enough to afford it. He will not go further, though, to make clear that Roebuck is hampered not only by the enemies in his own class but also by his failure to enlist the support of the people in whose interest he wants to work. Since these alone are capable of fighting successfully, Roebuck's lack of contact with them is, objectively, an evasion of his responsibility. The dimensions of his plan and his effort are accordingly reduced and their meaning romanticized.

The trouble with Roebuck is that he is a little too much like Vincent Sheean. Sheean too is an Haroun al-Raschid, but one who wanders among the rich and their fascinating troubles. In every one of his books, most of which deal with contemporary problems, one has the feeling that the author sees himself as a minor tragic figure, isolated but not courageous. His hero is a small offering to the gods of history, thin enough to slip through the needle's eye into heaven instead of having to force the doors open.

It is unfortunate that such a sensitive writer should always turn away from the basic realities behind the phenomena he describes so sharply. He writes so well of the debasement of wealthy individuals by the hypocritical and irresponsible standards of their class, of anti-Semitism and Jim Crow, of the suspicion which the rich have toward creative artists and ideas. Yet he cannot get himself to depict the creative power which is expressed in the thoughts and actions of those whom the rich exploit. He is not only committed to failure; one suspects that he takes solace in it. DAVID ALMAN.

## Classroom Text

SURVEY OF LABOR ECONOMICS, *by Florence Peterson. Harpers.* $4.

A SUPERFICIAL review of this book in the New York *Times* called it "unromantic," especially because it does not mention by name the colorful John L. Lewis. But facts do not need to be romantic in order to be interesting, and insofar as this book is factual, it is useful.

Florence Peterson, who has assembled the data in this 843-page volume, is an economist in the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. She is the author of two books on American labor unions and also a lecturer at the American University in Washington, D. C. Most of the chapters in the present stout survey have probably served for her lectures and been tried out as a basic course for college students. As the latest in a six-foot shelf of text-books on labor problems the volume contains much up-to-date information that earlier volumes naturally could not cover. The intricate subject of social security, for example, is reliably discussed in 118 pages, including even a summary of the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill. These pages prove that present social security benefits are not at all adequate.

Bias asserts itself, however, through Miss Peterson's supposedly objective and unprejudiced appraisal when she comes to the theory of wages and the nature of wages. She tries to be "fair" in a brief statement on the Marxist labor theory of value. But she dismisses it immediately with the orthodox economists' answer to Marx and then moves on to a lengthy discussion of the marginal productivity theory of wages. Her selected references on the subject of wages do not include any works of Marx. Her students are evidently expected to condemn Marxist theory without even a chance to know what it really is.

Prejudiced also is her discussion of left-wing unionism in the years 1928 to 1934. She says the Trade Union Unity League was merely capitalizing on the workers' discontent. She does not recognize that the industrial unions of that period helped to make possible the rise of the great CIO unions in the mass-production industries.

For convenient reference on many topics, however, this handbook is undoubtedly useful. It represents about the best that can be expected in an "authoritative" college textbook on labor problems. But in any good trade union library, it should be supplemented by Philip Foner's *History of the Labor Movement in the United States* and by the volumes in Labor Research Association's *Labor Fact Book* series.

GRACE HUTCHINS.

## Books Received

THE GIFT OF LIFE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, *by W. E. Woodward. Dutton.* $4.75. This is the kind of life history an author might think of handing to his circle of close friends. It is almost completely devoid of interest to anyone else. It is strange to leaf through this book by one of America's most prominent historians and find nothing but the most trivial anecdotes and reflections. There is not the slightest sense of intellectual development conveyed in this big, rambling overly-innocent confession.

A WORLD OF GREAT SHORT STORIES, *selected and edited by Hiram Haydn and John Cournos.* $3.95. A world anthology of twentieth-century fiction. One hundred and fifteen stories are included.

UNCLE TOM'S CHILDREN, *by Richard Wright. Penguin.* 25¢. This reprint includes the famous story "Bright and Morning Star."

JOURNEYMAN, *by Erskine Caldwell. Penguin.* 25¢. Reprint of a novel first published in 1935.

LAW IN ACTION, AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE LAW IN LITERATURE, *edited by Amicus Curiae. Introduction by Roscoe Pound. Crown.* $3. The "friend of the court" has collected, with few exceptions, a fine group of stories connected with judicial practice and malpractice. Included, among many others, are the four gospel versions of the trial of Jesus, Macaulay's account of Judge Jeffrey's, Balzac's "Commission in Lunacy," and stories by Rabelais, Thomas Wolfe, Swift, Anatole France and Herman Melville.

THE INDIANS OF THE AMERICAS, *by John Collier.* $3.75. John Collier, who served as US Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1933 to 1945, is one of the world's foremost authorities on the history and problems of the Indians. His book is an account of the Indian people of North and South America from the palaeolithic age to the present, with special emphasis on their tenacious struggle for national survival in the face of ruthless persecution. Mr. Collier concludes that for the Indians themselves not mere existence but the extension of their social life and culture has become an immediate and realizable task.

THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS READER, *edited by Hamilton Fish Armstrong. Harper.* $5. Twenty-nine selected articles from the more than one thousand which have appeared in the magazine *Foreign Affairs* since its first issue in the autumn of 1922. A curious collection of some good and much bad, with W. E. B. DuBois sharing the pages uncomfortably with John Foster Dulles, Isaiah Bowman and Leon Trotsky. The position of the Soviet Union is, ironically, represented by Radek and Bukharin. The book will be of most interest and service to the professional student of foreign affairs.

HOW TO BUY MORE FOR YOUR MONEY, *by Sidney Margolius. Doubleday.* $1.50. The shopping news editor of *PM* has gotten out a very useful general shopping guide on the price and quality of most standard commodities.

AND CALL IT PEACE, *by Marshall Knappen. University of Chicago.* $3. The author was chief of the Religious Affairs Section and deputy chief of the Education Section, Office of Military Government for Germany (US). He is described as a strong opponent of the Morgenthau and a believer in the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Germany. The book, however, rarely reaches a level on which questions of policy can be considered or argued. It is filled with administrative preoccupations, with Mr. Knappen never raising his head to understand the connection between specific ineptness and political program.



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# sights and sounds

## GET OUT THE SUBPOENAS!

***Straight goods on racism. A film that should set the snoopers standing on their long ears.***

**By DENNIS GOBBINS**

I'M AFRAID there is going to be another Reichstag trial in the House Office Building: some Hollywood people have produced a film called *Gentleman's Agreement.* It is everything the word "un-American" means to the Member of Congress from the Seventh District of New Jersey. Mr. Thomas is probably getting out the subpoenas. Here are the correct spellings: Darryl F. Zanuck, producer, Twentieth-Century Fox; Gregory Peck, actor; Moss Hart, scenarist; Elia Kazan, director; Laura Z. Hobson, author; Dorothy McGuire, actress; John Garfield, actor; Celeste Holm, actress; Anne Revere, actress; June Havoc, actress; Albert Dekker, actor; and Dean Stockwell, child actor.

These parties have assumed collective guilt. The newspaper ads for *Gentleman's Agreement* state that "of all the stars in Hollywood who wanted to do something about it, these were the ones chosen."

The picture is a determined, all-out, socking attack on anti-Semitism. It names all the dirty names: kike, sheeny, bilbo, coon, rankin, nigger, yid and geraldelkaysmith. I was so dazed maybe they even said "jayparnellthomas" and I missed it. It will be difficult for any decent American to come away from this film without being in that patriotic state of *incontempt* defined by the Rankin-Thomas committee. It will cost a mere balcony ticket to get incontempt.

Before I make my spectacular balloon ascension on the film, there is a little ballast to be left behind. *Gentleman's Agreement* shows the inhuman cruelty of anti-Semitism and it says plainly and in parable, let's fight it. The child in the picture who has been wounded by juvenile Jew-baiters asks why. The film does not explain why. It argues that racists are uncouth and that you will find racism practiced even by those who profess to know better, such as the heroine. If chauvinism is merely ignorance and misunderstanding, both dramatically illustrated here, then *Gentlman's Agreement* is the great social film of Hollywood history. But somebody sets the fires which have literally burned human beings. Organized effort keeps this genocidal madness alive. Somebody benefits by anti-Semitism. The movie names Gerald L. K. Smith and Rankin by name, but what is their motive? No answer. A social problem in a work of art must be explained. *Gentleman's Agreement* shows the symbolical lynch tree but it does not put the ax to the roots. The authors might have embodied two texts in their wonderful film. The first is a pragmatic explanation of racism by Frederick H. Ecker of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., who explained his "gentleman's agreement" barring Negroes from Stuyvesant Town by saying, "It isn't a social question with us at all, but a matter of business and economics." The second text is a profound philosophical answer which may serve as the thesis of a great drama to come, "Anti-Semitism is the socialism of fools." Frederick Engels said that.

BALLAST away! Col. Zanuck is in command of this balloon. The argument of *Gentleman's Agreement* is contained in a beautifully inverted escape theme, in itself a shining wonder among Hollywood plots. Gregory Peck is a magazine writer who undertakes a series on anti-Semitism. In wrestling with a gimmick for the story he hits upon the idea of pretending to be a Jew. The consequences fall on him one by one in his love affair, his family, his social life, touch on his friend's housing problem and his own professional life. The hero can always get out. He can stop being a Jew any time he wants to. But at first the demands of his story hold him to his duty, and then as the blows rain down on him he begins to take a bitter pride in his transformation. When his articles are written he steps back across the line, an educated man. He may again call himself a Christian, but he has won the title the hard way. His Christianity is that of Christ, and not of the phony clerics, exploiters and jacks-in-office who have stolen the magic word.

Zanuck allows the events to happen without waving any of them away with his enchanted scepter. Even this happens: when the reporter announces his intention to write on anti-Semitism to his publisher's luncheon guests, a Jewish industrialist suggests that sleeping dogs should be allowed to sleep it off. The appeaser is refuted.

The picture stumbles for almost two reels, getting the story and characterizations set up. Gregory Peck, who must be a tired man after giving the producers twenty years' work in five, has the actor's plum of the season. Peck on the screen and Elia Kazan out of the frame have constructed a characterization, that of a glum California widower who has come to New York with his young son and heart-diseased mother to catch a story assignment which baffles him. What the actor and director do with Schuyler Green (alias Phil Greenberg) is as worthy as some of the characterizations of Jean Renoir in his French days.

Peck plays the darkling journalist without skidding off into winsome smiles, or letting the brooding man escape him.

Dorothy McGuire, playing the divorcee heroine from Darien, Conn., tries to sharpen a dull dramatic foil. Kathy is a stick. Miss McGuire makes with the glycerine eyes, but it is difficult to believe that a man as smart as Phil would go for Kathy, especially when he has Celeste Holm doing graceful leaps into his lap. Miss Holm has her first major role. She is batting



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fourth in the lineup, and it proves to be cleanup position. She is a gassy and glossy fashion editor who has been allotted Moss Hart's best laugh lines. I can think of a half-dozen Hollywood girls who would have done nicely as Anne Dettrey, but of none who could have cleaned the bases every time at bat.

You have to talk about acting a lot on this film, over and above the outstanding directing job of Kazan. John Garfield plays Dave Goldman, the hero's best friend. Garfield's choice is a challenge to stars of his stature. He comes on three-quarters of the way through the film and has only two big scenes. When Garfield talks about anti-Semitism you can sense a volcano inside a crater. It does not erupt, but the power held under control is transmitted to the audience. John Garfield has a strong discipline as an actor.

*Gentleman's Agreement* is a chapter in film history. But who goes to see chapters in film history, except at the Museum of Modern Art? In this case, many, many people. Go and get yourself *incontempt*.

## THEATER

TOPICAL plays age rapidly. St. John Ervine's *The First Mrs. Fraser*, currently being reviewed at the Shubert, must have seemed relevant and revealing to its generation, since it was a great success and well thought of by its first critics. To that generation, apparently, the major problem of divorce was its train of social embarrassments. Divorce has since become endemic as well as epidemic, forcing awareness upon us of its more basic social and psychological problems. Consequently the Ervine play, to our more troubled generation, seems a little crude and pointless, as social commentary. As comedy it lacks deftness and wit.

I found Miss Cowl's performance distinguished, despite its mannerisms; and Henry Daniell, Frances Tannehill and Reginald Mason turned in good supporting performances.

IN MY opinion, the critics made altogether too much of the performances, at The Playhouse, of Edith Piaf and her "Continental entertainers." Though the word "chanteuse" sounds artier, Miss Piaf seemed to me just a top French variant of night-club singer. The accompanying acts were skillful or amusing, depending on whether they were acrobats or comics; but if they represent, as is claimed, the best of such Continental talent, we can only conclude that Europe is no better off than we in that area of culture. I found the charade singing of "Les Compagnons de la Chanson" most satisfying in an evening that was entertaining but not remarkable.

FOR its new production the Theater Guild went to Holland and came back with Jau de Hartog's *This Time Tomorrow*, a philosophically inarticulate disquisition on super-sensory phenomena, life, death and immortality. A conclusion is arrived at: that immortality is the perpetual renewal of life in the succession of lives, as the earth's waters are renewed, after evaporation, in rain. That conclusion did not warrant importation; we produce such banalities at home in exportable quantities. The other great idea in the play is that sexual life is self-destroying. The urge to reproduce ourselves keeps us going; satisfy it and we expire, like those insects that never survive the nuptial flight. We produce that brand of wisdom also in exportable quantities. *This Time Tomorrow* is given the customary expert Theater Guild production at the Ethel Barrymore Theater, and the acting is outstandingly good, particularly that of Sam Jaffe. A pity to waste them on something so pretentious.

"FOR LOVE OR MONEY," at the Henry Miller, is fairly standard bedroom farce. It is trite and implausible but it can kill an evening painlessly if your mind is kept at semi-torpor.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

## RECORDS

ALTHOUGH still a young man, Robert Shaw is doing more than any other single figure to give our concert halls a content of a mature musical culture. His chorus is truly "mixed," giving Negro singers an opportunity to perform the length and breadth of the world's music. His programs have restored forgotten choral masterpieces of the past, and introduced works fresh from the pen of living composers. His recordings alone have included such works as Hindemith songs, a Bach Cantata, the Brahms *liebeslieder* and Blitzstein's Airborne Symphony, and he now offers the ambitious project of the complete Bach B Minor Mass.

The performance is, like all of his, a musicianly job, with the unflagging move-



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ment and clarity of line that are essential to a Bach reading. The excellent recording enables all the musical beauties to be heard, as the recording to this work made twenty years ago did not. It is not a "dream" performance. One can imagine, for instance, more anguish in the "Crucifixus," and more grandeur in the "Sanctus." The soloists, also young, are not absolutely first-rate—though two of them, the bass Paul Matthen and the mezzo Lydia Summers, are very good indeed. Even in the solos, however, the combination of the vocal line with the colorful and splendidly performed obbligatos gives the music a wholeness not found in the old recording. The music is of course one of the greatest of world masterpieces (RCA Victor DM 1145).

Arthur Rubinstein offers the Lizst E Flat Concerto, with Dorati conducting the Dallas Symphony (RCA Victor 1144); also an album including Brahms' Rhapsody in G Minor, Hungarian Dance No. 4 and Wiegenlied, Schumann's Arabesque Op. 18, *Traumerei and Widmung* (RCA Victor 1149). These performances will delight his new-found movie audience, and show him still a master of tone and technique, but becoming increasingly sentimental and flamboyant. A much higher brand of musical intelligence is displayed in Robert Casadesus' performance of the Chopin B Flat Minor Sonata. If it won't please all the Chopin lovers (what performance can?) it is nevertheless a subtle and sensitive reading that gives the music greater stature than usual (Columbia 698). Rudolf Serkin turns in a fine performance of the Beethoven *Apassionata* Sonata, better recorded than his previous Beethoven albums. The finger-work is immaculate, the lines of the music are built up with understanding. Only an over-violent attack, hinting at nervousness, prevents this from being a truly great performance (Columbia 711).

Monteux and the San Francisco Symphony offer the first domestic recording of the Suite No. 1 from Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe*, and the *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*. The music is lush, tasteful and a little faded; the reading excellent; the recording fair (RCA Victor 1145). Dorothy Kirsten's first recording, the first- and third-act arias from *La Boheme*, shows a voice beautiful in timbre and even more admirable in its handling and control (Victor).

Doc Evans' Dixieland Five offer an album of old blues and ragtime favorites with lots of verve and full attention to the traditional style, with Joe Sullivan's piano and George Wettling's drums providing the touch of "something different." "That's a Plenty" especially shakes the roof (Disc 715). The interesting and valuable Disc "Ethnic Series" continues with "Folk Music of Haiti" taken from authentic recordings, and displaying a great variety of strange rhythmic, vocal and timbre patterns. (Disc 142).

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